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Friday, February 5, 1999

DAILY LE

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Googerty works to be on exhibited at Memphis museum

'Strange, tall gaunt man' was influential teacher

(Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part story. Part one appeared in Thursday's Daily Leader.)

By John Faddoul
Staff Reporter

An exhibition at a Memphis museum this spring will salute Pontiac native Thomas F. Googerty, a turn-of-the-century blacksmithing instructor whose influence in metalworking continues to this day — but who lived and worked in a Pontiac hardly imaginable to its residents at the end of the same century.

The exhibit, at the National Ornamental Metal Museum from April 25 through July 3, was first proposed some 10 years ago by a Pontiac native who's felt the influence of Googerty on his own life.

Howard S. Miller is a senior curator for special projects for the ornamental metal museum. He grew up in Pontiac, graduated from high school here, and became a history professor, retiring in 1991 from the University of Missouri at St. Louis. As a child, he knew Googerty, who was a friend of his parents, Clarence and Virginia Miller. Miller, born in 1936, knew Googerty, born in 1864, as an old man, who was to die in 1945.

"I remember him as this strange, tall gaunt man," Miller said in a telephone interview. He said Googerty was very friendly but "always watching." Miller recalled a time he was drawing with crayons while lying on the floor when Googerty was visiting his parents. He remembered Googerty as observing his drawing and suggesting how to change lines on it. "He's been looking over my shoulder most of my life," Miller said.

"I've wanted to do something about Googerty all my adult life," Miller said, and his suggestion to the museum a decade ago will become reality this spring.

The reality of the Pontiac of Googerty's era will be a prominent part of the exhibit, whose very title suggests Googerty's work with reformatory students at what is now the Pontiac prison: "Forging Character, Forging Iron: The Work of Thomas F. Googerty."

"The real story, and the still untold story, is what happened to his students," Miller asserted. In his 30-plus years at the prison, Googerty worked with a dozen or two dozen apprentices at a time, producing tremendous amounts of functional or decorative ironwork. More than 400 pieces have been documented as coming from the reformatory's forge, Miller said, "and that's the tip of the iceberg."

At the same time, it was being produced at an institution so different from today's prison that it was a center of Pontiac's social and cultural life. Band concerts by inmates and ice-cream socials on the reformatory grounds drew big crowds, Miller said.

The best lecture hall in the city was at the reformatory, and women dressed in their Gay Nineties finest would visit a place that was a major area tourist attraction, Miller said. A local church almost every week would invite the reformatory choir to sing, and inmates marched in city parades.

The six-foot-high wood fence around the reformatory was in disrepair, but no one seemed to mind, Miller said. Some of the inmates were as young as 8 years old.

"It was a very heady, idealistic reformatory," Miller said. "Apparently, it rather worked."

Miller said he's found it impossible to trace or name all the student-produced metalwork, much of which he said is of museum-grade quality. He does have a list of all prisoners from the Googerty era, and has placed inquiries in newspapers. But he concedes it's hard to ask someone if his grandfather did time at Pontiac's reformatory.

"Googerty was particularly interested in African-Americans, at a time of raging racism in America," Miller pointed out. He said he's looked at Googerty family albums. Glued next to photos of family members and of old girlfriends of Googerty's were photos of

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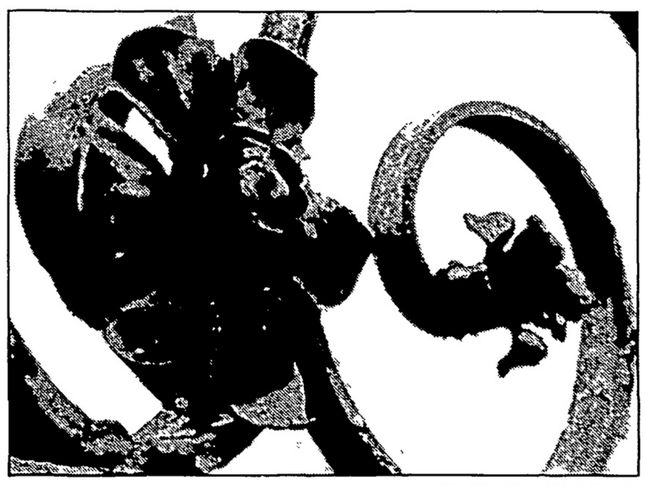

Karl Holohan/*Daily Leader*

This is a detail of the gates at Pontiac's South Side Cemetery that will be on display at a Memphis museum focusing on the work of Thomas F. Googerty.

Thomas F. Googerty, left, is shown in a 1915 photo with dentist Thomas Lockie. They were co-founders of the Amitytown Society of Painters.

State superintendent visits Chenoa

By John Faddoul
Staff Reporter

CHENOA — The state's recently appointed superintendent of education kept his promise to visit the Chenoa school district, touring the schools Thursday, having lunch with students and meeting with superintendents from Livingston County districts.

Max McGee, who was appointed superintendent last fall, had spoken then of his intent to be concerned with schools "from Chicago to Chenoa," referring to their enrollments, not their locations.

Thursday, while on his way to Chicago, McGee spent about four hours in the district. In remarks to teachers, school board members and others before leaving, McGee said he was touched by teacher interaction with students, alert students and the overall "life" in the school.

"You're giving your kids a lifetime of learning," McGee told the audience. The district is upgrading its technology plan, with a deadline of Jan. 1, 2000. "Keep up the good work, bring on Y2K and most of all invite me back again," McGee said.

That invitation's already been made, according to Chenoa Superintendent Tom Bock. "We were very pleased and elated at the superintendent's visit here," Bock said today. "I think he demonstrated a keen interest and awareness of every school district in the state of Illinois," regardless of enrollment numbers.

Present on Thursday were Bernetta and Les Price, who owned the former La Officina restaurant in Chenoa where McGee would stop to eat on his travels between Springfield and Chicago. McGee would show them photographs of his two adopted sons.

Bock said he found McGee "down-to-earth and well intentioned" while accompanying him on tours of both the high school and grade school, where McGee "took on any and all questions" from teachers and others.

Bock said he was pleased with McGee's comments about the district. Bock compared what McGee is trying to do at the state level with what the Chenoa district is trying to do locally: making a world-class educational system. "He's restoring that proud tradition" to make Illinois a frontrunner in education, Bock said, just as the Chenoa district is "on the rebound." In introducing McGee to the afternoon assembly, Bock said he thinks McGee can make Illinois "first in education, not only in the United States, but in the world."

McGee also met Thursday morning with some 35 superintendents, including those from most Livingston County districts, who attended a Corn Belt Division meeting of the Illinois Association of School Administrators. The meeting was scheduled in conjunction with McGee's visit, and McGee spent about 30 minutes with the group.

Among the administrators attending was Pontiac Township High School Superintendent Ronald Yates. It was his third contact with McGee.

"Each time, I've come away very enthusiastic and energized by what he's going to bring to the Illinois State Board of Education," Yates said today.

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Karl Holohan/*Daily Leader*

State school Superintendent Max McGee, second from left, shakes hands with Chenoa school board Vice President Brett Johnson during a visit to the district Thursday. At left is Regional Superintendent Eugene Jontry and at right Chenoa Superintendent Tom Bock.

Lewinsky still has 'mixed feelings' for the president

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sentimental without swaying from her story, Monica Lewinsky declared to House prosecutors in a videotaped deposition that President Clinton never suggested she file a false affidavit to deny their affair. She said she was "a pest" to presidential friend Vernon Jordan in seeking a job.

Lewinsky said she now has "mixed feelings" for Clinton and objected when her congressional inquisitor, Rep. Ed Bryant, referred to her relations with Clinton as "salacious."

Congress today released transcripts of the depositions taken this week from Ms. Lewinsky, Jordan and White House aide Sidney Blumenthal. Excerpts from all three are to be played at the impeachment trial on Saturday, giving Americans their first view of Ms. Lewinsky answering questions.

In her deposition taped earlier this week, Ms. Lewinsky recounted a middle-of-the-night telephone call from Clinton on Dec. 17, 1997. During the call, the president informed her she might become a witness in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case and suggested she could file an affidavit to avoid being deposed.

But in testimony that undermines one aspect of the perjury and obstruction of justice charges against Clinton, the former White House intern insisted Clinton never told her to file a false affidavit. "There was no discussion of what would be in an affidavit," she said. "I don't think I necessarily thought at that point it would have to be false."

When Bryant pressed further, Ms. Lewinsky conceded that during that same conversation she began thinking to herself that she would deny the relationship because she and the president had always planned to use "cover stories" to conceal their affair. "From what I learned through those cover stories from what I learned in that conversation I thought to myself I knew I would deny the relationship," Ms. Lewinsky explained.

She said the president never told her to lie or to tell the truth. She refused to say whether she felt Clinton lied when he denied touching her in a sexual manner.

In her sworn testimony to prosecutor Kenneth Starr, Ms. Lewinsky said Clinton touched her. Clinton denied that he touched her in a sexual manner although he acknowledged an inappropriate relationship.

Several times in her deposition, Ms. Lewinsky reflected sentimentally on her secret affair with the president and the tumultuous times when it was exposed and exploded into an impeachment crisis.

The questioning turned personal when Bryant asked Ms. Lewinsky whether she still had "feelings for the president" a year later.

"I have mixed feelings," she replied. She answered "yes" twice when Bryant asked if she still admired the president.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Robin Leach named in lawsuit

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — Robin Leach's champagne wishes and caviar dreams are being replaced by subpoenas and legal fees.

Illinois sued Leach, host of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," and two Florida companies Thursday, accusing them of misleading consumers about vacation packages. Five other states are also suing.

The lawsuit claims Florida-based National Travel Services Inc. and Plaza Resorts Inc. did not tell customers how much their vacation packages actually cost or that they were required to attend a time-share sales presentation.

The supposedly free Florida vacations actually cost hundreds of dollars in airfare, hotel accommodations and service fees, the lawsuit alleges.

Leach is accused of endorsing the alleged scams through the use of his name and photograph.

Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan is seeking an injunction, restitution to consumers, a civil penalty of $50,000 and an additional penalty of $50,000 for each fraudulent act.

Ohio, North Carolina, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin are also suing.

Ryan says no to tax-relief plan

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — Gov. George Ryan said Thursday that despite a huge surplus in the state budget, this is not the time to cut taxes.

The state budget is expected to run a surplus of more than $1.1 billion dollars this year. House Republican Leader Lee Daniels of Elmhurst has proposed spending nearly one-third of that on income tax relief for homeowners.

But Ryan said he opposes that plan.

"I think there's not room for a tax cut," the Republican governor said. "I think that there are lots of programs we need to do, and that billion-one can manage (to disappear) pretty fast."

Ryan has said education and transportation will be two of his top priorities in the next budget.

Senate President James "Pate" Philip, R-Wood Dale, has also questioned whether the state has enough money to justify a tax cut.

Illinois Lottery

Thursday
Pick 3-Midday: 1-9-4
Pick 3-Evening: 9-1-7
Pick 4-Midday: 6-8-3-9
Pick 4-Evening: 6-7-4-6
Little Lotto: 1-16-17-22-30
Estimated Lotto Jackpot: $6 million
Estimated Big Game Jackpot: $5 million

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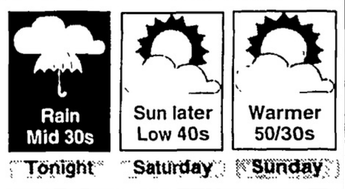
WEATHER



FORECAST

Occasional rain. Low in the middle or upper 30s. Southwest wind 10 to 20 mph shifting northwest late. A 30 percent chance of early morning rain then becoming partly sunny on Saturday. High in the lower 40s. Mostly cloudy on Sunday. High around 50.

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